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The characteristics of substance abusers attending a detox hospital in Oman and patterns of their utilization of healthcare services

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Introduction: It is indicated that Oman is witnessing an increase in issues pertinent to alcohol and drug abuse.

Aim: The aim of this study was to identify the characteristics of drug abusers attending a detox hospital in Oman and the pattern of their healthcare services utilization. Related aim was to ascertain the age group most vulnerable to alcohol and drug abuse.

Method: A cross sectional study was conducted in a tertiary care center for alcohol and drug abuse in Oman. The patients who are in treatment for detox were selected from a convenience sample from among patients who were seeking consultation for alcohol and drug abuse at the center. A six-part questionnaire was designed to solicit their socio-demographic background and clinical history, as well as healthcare utilization and its perceived barriers. Chi-square analysis was used to evaluate significance of differences among categorical data. Logistic regression modelling was used to obtain measures of associations after adjusting for confounding factors.

Results: Among patients (n=293) seeking detox, 99% were male and younger than 30 years. A peer influence on the initiation to substance abuse problems was significant. Most patients had poly-substance abuse problems including intravenous drug abuse. Cannabis and alcohol were the first substances consumed by most patients. Hepatitis C and psychiatric disorders were found to be the most common co-morbidities. Those dependent on cannabis and benzodiazepines were more likely to perceive “improvement” upon receiving detox.

Conclusion: This study indicates that males below 30 years of age with poly substance abuse problems are likely to attend a detox hospital in Oman. This study has identified the socio-demographic background, risk factors and perceived barriers that could lay groundwork for further scrutiny on emerging substance abuse problems in Oman.

Biography

Al Khatib Rashid Al Saadi, MD, graduated from college of Medicine at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and first year Psychiatry Resident in Oman Medical Speciality Board. He is interested in drug addiction and participant in community psychiatry awareness programs and campaigns.

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